

STAT

TO THE POINT
6 February 1976

EDITORIAL

Stripping the CIA

Without effective intelligence capability, the US stands blind and hobbled. That is the strong language President Gerald Ford used to warn Congress in his recent State of the Union message. Unfortunately, the Ford warning has apparently fallen on deaf ears representing a majority in Congress. Still, the important question in the minds of all loyal Americans must remain: Why did America establish the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the first place?

Simply stated, it was the fear of another Pearl Harbour. At the time, all of the most important decision-makers in the American Government agreed that it was unthinkable for a great country to be taken by surprise by *any* event which might endanger its security, however remote the possibility of such an event might seem. In the late Forties a group of Pentagon, State Department and CIA planners attempted to calculate every major threat to American security that could conceivably arise and to work out dependable plans which, when a threat actually arose, could be dusted off and implemented without the need for a lot of ad hoc revisions. By the early Fifties, the CIA's information had pointed to developing situations which could lead to World War Three and contingency plans were drawn up for each.

As the years passed, the Planning Committee deteriorated mainly because the quality of its members dropped, but also because basic changes in world circumstances made the contingencies less and less realistic. The American military thought in terms of "first strike capability", while the politicians believed that Russia sought to win victories without fighting. Hopefully, Angola may be the event that will eventually bring the politicians to their senses.

While the Leftist war against the CIA has dragged on for years, only recently has it flared into the open. The recent murder of Richard Welch, head of the CIA in Greece, was the result of the publication of his name, among many others, by the French weekly *Liberation*. The editor of that magazine has vowed to expose the CIA whenever he can, and his campaign has found many supporters throughout the world and even in the US itself.

We must face the fact that intelligence services everywhere resort to "dirty tricks" to gain information. No spy agency would last long with a code of ethics like that of the Boy Scouts. But to describe the CIA's methods as an all-time low in international relations is to live in a dream world where the spies are all nice guys who wouldn't hurt a fly. Can we imagine Russia's Brezhnev forcing the KGB to open its files and so expose to the world the names of its agents and sympathisers in the West? The idea is ludicrous.

The result of the CIA expose could be more suicidal than any unilateral disarmament programme.